

## The Real Cost of Prisons

Recently BOP Director Harley Lappin determined it costs \$27,000 annually to house a single prisoner. The agency which houses approximately 220,000 prisoners has an annual budget of \$ 7,500,000,000.00 and that's just the federal system. America overall has approximately 2,800,000 prisoners, 25% of the earth's prisoners in a country with 5% of the earth's population. America spends nearly \$ 400,000,000,000.00 per year on its prisons.

Such numbers by themselves are staggering but consider this: Prison inmates do not receive college or vocational training, nor drug rehabilitation. Many are poor and uneducated. Many are addicted to drugs and continue to use drugs in prison. Most are just as poor, uneducated and addicted upon release as they were upon conviction.

Now some would argue crime deserves punishment regardless of cost but consider this: Each year America could build 4,000,000 homes for the homeless, or send about 1,333,000 kids to Ivy league colleges, or feed 400,000,000 starving men, women and children. We could return man to the moon with cash to spare, we could repair our crumbling infrastructure, we could put millions of unemployed to work.

So I ask my readers this, which do you think is the most beneficial societal expenditure? Prisons or some of the other things? Food for thought.